

**TOWN COUNCIL
JULY 14, 2009 MEETING**

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**STATUS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION FOR
MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Revitalization Committee was created by Town Council resolution, June 10, 2008. In January 2009, the Downtown Revitalization Committee and the Economic Development Commission began to hold joint meetings on the project plans to improve the municipal parking lot. Since June 2008, fourteen (14) meetings have been convened. Two meetings, July 16, 2008 and January 15, 2009, were held as public informational sessions. In addition, the Committee conducted a walking tour of the entire parking lot on July 8, 2008.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Municipal parking lot is located within the superblock bounded by East Cedar Street, Constance Leigh Drive, Market Square and Main Street. The parking lot area is approximately 5 acres. It is bounded by land uses that include personal services, restaurants, professional services, apartments as well as several specialty business services such as tailor, shoe repair, gun store, bike shop and florist.

The goal of this project is to successfully achieve the following outcomes:

- 1) Acquisition of the 25,629 square foot Bonelli property and complete the assemblage of the parking lot.
- 2) Construct subsurface storm water detention system sufficiently sized to accommodate the fully assembled parking lot.
- 3) Complete the parking space build out and vehicular circulation of the western half of the parking lot.
- 4) Provide a “center green space” for public events and activities that promote the economic vitality and attracts private reinvestment.
- 5) Provide an accessible pedestrian sidewalk system that connects the parking lot to perimeter public streets and links east and west sides of the municipal lot to the “center green space”.
- 6) Provide 400 parking spaces, sufficient enough to support the parking requirements of approximately 115,000 to 118,000 square feet of gross floor area development.

The realization of these outcomes will benefit the Town Center in the following ways:

- 1) Encourages private development in the Center.
- 2) Reuses underdeveloped property.
- 3) Supports the long range vision for a vitalized Town Center by completion of a central public parking area.

- 4) Provides public festival space.
- 5) Enhances a pedestrian friendly walk able business environment.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Completing the full build out of the municipal parking lot will require the acquisition of 25,629 square foot Bonelli property behind 1076-1090 Main Street. The assemblage of this property is necessary to provide adequate public parking; complete construction of vehicular travel ways connected to east side parking area and driveway connections from East Cedar Street, Main Street and Market Square; and provides area for subsurface storm water detention.

LAND COVERAGE AND ADDITIONAL BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

The building coverage adjacent to the municipal parking lot could be increased by in fill development of vacant properties along East Cedar Street and the redevelopment of under utilized parcels where additional floor area can now be accommodated because of the completed parking lot build out. One story buildings could be replaced with three (3) story uses, some mixed uses with first floor commercial.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The existing street system of the surrounding super block adequately provides access to the municipal lot. Two (2) full access drives, one on Constance Leigh and the second from Market Square, can be improved with sidewalks for pedestrian connections and there are three one-way entrances drives connect to (1) Main Street and (2) East Cedar.

A pedestrian way from Main Street, between 1048 to 1052, needs to be improved. Pedestrian amenities, such as way finding signs, walkway lighting, and pavement markings could be constructed to strengthen connection to adjacent streetscape.

PARKING

Over the past 50 years eighteen property owners have donated land for the assemblage of 4.7 acres of public parking lot.

There are currently 390 public parking spaces. Based on the current developed 78,000 sq. ft. gross floor area adjacent to the lot there is a “surplus” of about 40 spaces. At 3.5 spaces per 1000 square feet of floor area these 40 parking spaces would support an additional 11,500 square feet of new gross floor area.

The acquisition of the Bonelli property behind 1076-1090 Main Street increases the parking lot to 5.2 acres and will provide approximately 72 additional parking spaces plus travel lanes. Deducting the parking spaces converted for the “center green use” and new travel lane configuration yields a net total parking count of approximately 400 spaces, 175 on the western side and 225 on the easterly side.

One of the economic development benefits of expanding the public parking lot will be the opportunity to attract and construct an additional 36,000 to 38,000 square feet of new gross floor area with convenient adjacent public parking.

ZONING STANDARDS

The site plan design complies with the Zoning Regulations standards for parking space size and travel aisle width, storm water management control for “0” run off and water quality structures to reduce sedimentation. The proposed 400 public parking space design is consistent with the Town Center Village Overlay District Design Standards (Section 3.12 A). This 400 space parking count, including 8 handicapped spaces, is adequate for the current 78,000 square feet of development abutting the parking lot and could accommodate additional new infill development of approximately 36,000 to 38,000 square feet.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

The infrastructure improvements that will benefit the business properties surrounding the completed municipal parking lot include:

- Expanded subsurface storm water detention system sized for the 5 acre parking lot at “0” run off.
- Removal and underground installation of overhead electrical system for entire lot.
- Proper sizing of new electrical distribution system to accommodate new lighting, trash compactors, public event “center green” area.
- New parking surface and curbing.
- New landscape plantings.
- Sidewalks linking internal parking area to adjacent streets.
- Relocation and re screening of trash compactors.
- Decorative lighting and benches consistent with existing streetscape theme.

PROBABLE PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

BL Companies, project engineers, have prepared a range of five probable cost estimates based on five reconstruction options:

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1) FULL BUILD OUT OF ENTIRE PARKING LOT:
(Options A and B together) | \$1,229,855 |
| 2) FULL BUILD OUT OF WEST SIDE:
(Option A) | \$826,966 |
| 3) PARTIAL BUILD OUT WEST SIDE:
(Option A alternate) | \$640,640 |
| 4) FULL BUILD OUT EAST SIDE:
(Option B) | \$499,669 |
| 5) PARTIAL BUILD OUT EAST SIDE:
(Option B alternate) | \$287,553 |

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The project bidding strategy must be carefully considered.

The Urban Action Grant construction budget is approximately \$600,000, only the east side full and partial build out meets this funding limit. However, the east side of the parking lot, constructed in the early 1980's, is in fair condition with some isolated pavement failures. The east side currently provides 217 parking spaces and has good lighting and drainage.

The acquisition of the Bonelli property, Certificate of Taking issued by Superior Court July 8, 2009, opens the way to finally complete the western side of the parking lot.

The full build out of the western side, probable cost \$826,966, accomplishes the project goals for expanded parking and improving internal circulation, both vehicles and pedestrians, functional storm drainage, and "center green" public space.

Further value engineering to reduce the probable construction cost estimate by \$80,000 to \$90,000 may be possible without sacrificing project goals for the western half of the parking lot. Some of the possible reductions could come from reduced sidewalk square footage, using bituminous curbing in selected areas, and deferring or reducing ornamental lighting fixtures.

These reductions, plus Town Council's reprogramming of the STEAP Phase III uncommitted balance of \$145,000, together with a favorable bidding environment could prove to be a positive strategy to achieve project implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At their joint meeting held July 9, 2009, the Economic Development Commission and Downtown Revitalization Committee jointly and unanimously voted to recommend that the Town Council consider a project bidding strategy comprised of three (3) pricing components:

1. Request bids for the full build of the entire parking lot Options A & B, probable cost estimate \$1,229,855.
2. Request bids for full build of west side Option A, probable cost estimate \$826,966.
3. Request bids for full build of east side Option B, probable cost estimate \$499,669.

Second, the Economic Development Commission and Downtown Revitalization Committee approved, with one abstention, to recommend that the Town Council request the Office of Policy and Management to reprogram the \$145,000 uncommitted balance of Phase III STEAP Main Street Improvement grant to the Municipal Parking Lot Improvement project.